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IS EUROPE REALLY THE DREAM? CONTINGENT PATHS AMONG SUB-SAHARAN MIGRANTS IN MOROCCO

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INTRODUCTION

For two decades, European policy discourse has increasingly depicted countries across North Africa as transit countries for irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa (Castagone 2011; Collyer 2007; De Haas 2008; Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008). Attempts to stem the influx of these migrants by sealing European borders through intensified surveillance of common entry-points and increasingly relocating border control to countries outside the European Union affects almost all migrants in North Africa. For those who planned to travel to Europe from the shores or airports of North Africa, the tightening of border control frequently extends their stay in the region (Alioua 2008; Brachet 2010; Escoffier 2006). Not only may migrants find themselves unable to leave because border patrols halt their departure or send them back in accordance with bilateral readmission agreements (Araújo 2011; Perrin 2008), they may also have difficulties raising money for the increasingly expensive journey to Europe (Collyer 2006). Migrants, who came to North Africa for other reasons, are also affected. Those who claim asylum upon their arrival are perceived by the authorities to have crossed the borders illegally, while students entering and staying legally often are mistaken for irregular migrants and subjected to the same level of control and exclusion (Berriane 2011; Brachet 2010). This is because immigration practices in North Africa tend to conflate all categories of migrants and treat them similarly, whether they have entered the country legally, illegally or in search of refuge (Castagone 2011). Notwithstanding their initial intentions then, migrants have similar experiences of living in North Africa (Brachet 2010; Grabska 2005). This article adds to an emerging body of literature exploring migrant existences in the border zones around Europe. Through the stories of three migrants in Morocco, the article explores how the concrete experience of living in the shadow of European regimes of mobility shapes migrants' lives in the everyday situation and changes their hoped-for futures. Lengthy periods of waiting and uncertainty have become intrinsic to migrants' lives in these zones as they chase new routes,

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money and/or better living conditions, while trying to achieve their goals (Conlon 2011; Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008; Poutignat 2012).

Recent work on refugee populations and forced displacement has highlighted the temporal and spatial aspects of protracted waiting and uncertainty. Through interrogating Australia's off-shore holding centres for asylum-seekers, Mountz (2011) points to the importance of embodying the experience of confinement to comprehend how processes of exclusion during protracted waiting may differ across gender, race and nationality. Even if migrants living in border zones are rarely confined to one location to the same degree as the asylum-seekers Mountz studied, it is central to examine the political economies of migration management in the analysis of their experience of waiting. Horst and Grabska (2015) and Brun (2015) theorize the linkages between displaced people's everyday experience of protracted uncertainty, hope and waiting. By drawing attention to the orientation towards the future and the agency implied in both the notion of hope and the notion of waiting the authors highlight the complementary processes in which displaced people engage to content with their circumstances. On the one hand, they continuously assess whether their goals are likely to be attained and therefore are worth waiting for and as part of this process maintain, or even insist on, the temporariness of their situation in the place of waiting. On the other hand, as waiting draws out the conditions of life may stabilize and ultimately change the way they think about their future and their inclination to wait (Brun 2015; Gasparini 1995). While these dimensions of waiting may seem universal, what sets them apart for displaced people, and for migrants living in precarious border zones I would add, is the processes of exclusion and prolonged uncertainty they have to endure (Brun 2015; Horst and Grabska 2015). It is thus important to examine how waiting and everyday life intersect and affect migrants' strategies, hopes and, ultimately, the end-goal of their migratory project.

Structural marginalization influences migrants' decisions about whether to stay or move on to other locations, but decisions are also driven by social imaginaries of what other locations may have in store in the near or distant future and by the imagined ramifications of living in a situation of constraint for a long period of time (Hage 2005; Mar 2005). An analytical move towards conceptualizing 'being in transit' as a process rather than a status (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008: 87), that is, as active waiting rather than as passively being stuck, is a step towards a more dynamic analysis. However, it does not capture the full complexity. This article offers insights into the material and moral considerations underpinning the way migrants from sub-Saharan Africa navigate migrant life in the Moroccan capital,

Rabat, and the objectives that inform their paths. It demonstrates the importance of including the triad of social environment, individual aspirations and collective expectations to really understand the social effects of migration management.

SHIFTING SOCIAL TERRAINS FOR MIGRANTS IN MOROCCO

Migration policies and the rhetoric surrounding migration are ambiguous and subject to shifting political winds. Although the effect of political peculiarities may appear contemporary, the current mobility patterns in Morocco have historical roots dating back several centuries. In more recent times the European guest worker schemes of the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the establishment of a Moroccan diaspora across Europe, and ancient African trade relations across the Sahara transformed into a circular trade regime, amongst others between Senegal and Morocco, which since the 1980s has become more informal and small-scale. The continued importance of Europe for the Moroccan economy has allowed the EU and individual European countries to influence migration politics and link development assistance and circular migration schemes for migrants of North African origin with increased combat of irregular migration from Moroccan shores (Tocci and Cassarino 2011: 16). In the following I briefly sketch the practical outcomes in the past two decades of the convergence of European and Moroccan regimes of mobility to contextualize the political economies of migration management and their effects on migrants from sub-Saharan Africa.

Up through the 1990s the reverberations of economic crisis, structural adjustment and unemployment increased migration flows across the African continent. Earlier migrations to France, Germany and the Netherlands were spurred by the search for more lucrative work but with urban unemployment rising in the early 1990s (Karam and Decaluwé 2010), Moroccans increasingly migrated for temporary and lowly-paid work in Spain. In 1991, a regularization programme issued by the Spanish state legalized the stay of many Moroccan migrants. The following year the two countries signed a readmission agreement according to which migrants entering Spain from Moroccan ports without the required papers could be deported back to Morocco. Contemporaneously Morocco became the destination or the point of departure for Europe for an increasing number of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa (Bredeloup and Pliez 2005). In the early 1990s many of these migrants crossed the land borders between Morocco and the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla (Barros et al. 2002: 63-4).

By the mid-1990s, the flow of asylum seekers into the Spanish enclaves increased significantly. Despite the readmission agreement Moroccan authorities only accepted the

readmission of their own nationals, not migrants from sub-Saharan Africa whose asylum applications had been rejected. With a growing migrant population in Ceuta and Melilla the Spanish state departed from the common border politics of the EU between 1996 and 1999 to initiate the integration of some 9,000 migrants into the labour force of mainland Spain (Ibid.: 72-3). Up through the 1990s different regularization processes in Spain legalized the stay of more than one million irregular migrants from around the world, suggesting to those waiting at the borders that the struggle was worthwhile (Carling 2007 cf. Johnson 2013: 81). After increasing pressure from Europe and the construction of border fences around the Spanish enclaves, the Moroccan state finally adopted a more restrictive migration regime in the late 1990s. Possibly this was also driven by domestic politics, as the urban unemployment peaked at 22 % in 1999 (Karam and Decaluwé 2010: 499).

Up through the 2000s, the patrol and closure of borders became a cat-and-mouse game, in which migrants planning to cross borders undocumented searched new possibilities and authorities hurried to close them. In the early 2000s there was a significant rise in boat migrants. European pressure on Morocco led to interception campaigns along the coast, deportation campaigns in the cities and an increase in expulsions of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Further changes to the legislation in 2003 enabled border police to refuse migrants entry into Morocco if they did not have sufficient means for the duration of their stay and proof of the nature of their journey. Such barriers could, however, be circumvented by entering the country undocumented or by paying an informal fee of €50 (Pian 2005: 170). The pressure also had repercussions for migrants engaged in trade whether they intended to continue their journey to Europe or not. In 2004, Moroccan authorities closed a market in Casablanca that served as the most important site for vendors from sub-Saharan Africa. Around the same time, surveillance of the Mediterranean and the number of interceptions increased, encouraging a rerouting of sea crossings from mainland Spain to the Canary Islands. The European border agency, Frontex, was established in 2004 to coordinate joint border patrol involving both European and North African forces. Furthermore, Spain established an integrated system for external surveillance in 2006, making it much more difficult to reach Europe by sea. Despite the fences, the borders of the Spanish enclaves entailed less risk of detection and some migrants considered them safer than crossing the seas (Andersson 2012; Johnson 2013). From the mid-2000s onwards the cat-and-mouse game has become increasingly acrimonious. In 2005, up to fifteen migrants were killed when part of large group of several hundred persons storming the fence surrounding Melilla. In the aftermaths, migrants from sub-Saharan Africa were evicted from the forests

around the Spanish enclaves and around 2,000 persons were deported to neighbouring Algeria. A year later a similar incident happened at the border of Ceuta, again resulting in the death of migrants. In 2007, two migrants were shot dead and another two injured by Moroccan police when intercepting a boat embarking towards the Canary Islands (Alioua 2008: 703; Escoffier 2006: 93). Since the summer 2012, the massive assaults on the fences surrounding Ceuta and Melilla have intensified. Despite the fences being fortified and heightened, migrants still enter the enclaves. Moroccan and Spanish security forces are criticized for being unnecessarily brutal to irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa (MSF 2013).

Border control spills into the cities. Rabat, the capital of Morocco, is the context of the study presented in this paper. It was chosen because, since 2005, an increasingly large proportion of the migrants from sub-Saharan Africa congregate in Rabat and Casablanca (Alioua 2007). Here the authorities retain more of a *laissez-faire* attitude to migrants than in the coastal cities known as nodes of departure towards southern Europe. Migrants thus have better possibilities for settling, even if only in a provisional and precarious way. In the following I describe the multiple policy shifts happening during the seven months I lived in Rabat to show the numerous dimensions of increased precariousness for migrants in just a short span of time.

In February 2012, the boulevards leading from Rabat's railway station to the old Medina were lined with street traders. Some of Moroccan origin but the majority was young Senegalese men and women, who displayed their goods of plastic sandals, leather covers for passports, cheap jewellery, and of increasing value, Senegalese *bazin* (cloth), decorative objects fabricated by Senegalese craftsmen in Rabat, and counterfeit mobile phones. They took pride in the special relationship between their country and Morocco that allowed them to enter for three months without a visa and, *de facto*, let them work without having all the right papers. The local authorities seemed not to mind the presence of micro-traders in the streets, but they also ignored that police officers working in the inner city had adopted their own peculiar practices: on a daily basis they levied an informal fee of 5 DH (45 cent) to leave the traders alone.

The situation was different for people seeking employment, whether they were Senegalese or of other nationalities. Those with technical or academic skills had difficulties finding work commensurate with their diplomas and experience. Labour legislation and practice had been tightened and by early 2012 migrants needed a residence permit to obtain formal work. In addition to a valid passport, applying for a residence permit entailed proof of

employment and housing, something migrants rarely had, or registration as a student. Of the 90 migrants I interviewed in Rabat, many men were employed informally on short contracts in building sites, maintenance work and decoration, or in bakeries. Women either worked as domestic servants or started micro-businesses in catering, beauty treatments, and trade in various products. The wages were low – both women and men earned about 60 to 90 DH (€5-8) per day. Much of the work was physically hard and migrants were frequently subjected to racial abuse from employers. However, the only way for migrants to navigate the informal labour market was to ignore abuse and minimize employment gaps that effectively erased the possibility of saving up. The women working in domestic service changed jobs until they found tolerable working conditions, while the men established their name with several employers who would call if needing extra hands. This way they circumvented battling over jobs with other migrants and Moroccan workers gathering on the street corners where employers picked up casual workers.

By June 2012, the terrain began to shift. First, the city council decided to clean the streets of informal traders, Moroccan as well as sub-Saharan African. Police men in pairs toured the streets slowly, giving the traders time to clear off and arresting a couple of mobile phone sellers only. However, they returned so frequently that they effectively destroyed the street traders' opportunities to make a living. The young traders lay low, relocated their trading places within the centre of the city or to small towns located in the vicinity of Rabat. However, as soon as police presence in the streets lessened, they re-occupied the pavements to trade. During the Ramadan (July-August), the street traders were again blocked from working. The police rounded up migrants who sought work as day labourers or begged in the streets and deported them to Algeria via the Oujda border-crossing.

After the Ramadan, migration control was stepped up even more. Police forces began knocking on the doors of houses accommodating migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in a systematic way. They arrested those without papers and deported them to Oujda. In line with earlier findings (e.g. Collyer 2006; Escoffier 2006:83-4) migrants frequently reported having their valuables confiscated by security forces or stolen by criminals from Morocco or sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, they recounted how they returned from no man's land on foot at risk of being apprehended by Algerian security forces and deported to Mali. In Oujda, those who had the means to buy a train ticket to Rabat were unable to do so unless they could show a valid entry stamp in their passport, a residence permit or, at least, a receipt of processing one. Hence most returned as blind passengers on the freight train. Life in Rabat also became more

difficult for the migrants because the number of assaults and knife crime carried out by young destitute Moroccans rose dramatically. The migrants repeatedly recounted that official complaints to the police seemed to spark retaliation against the plaintiff, not the Moroccan perpetrators.

The following stories illustrate what motivated three migrants from Cameroon, Liberia/Guinea and Senegal to come to Morocco and how they experience living in Rabat.¹ The analysis focuses on how the experience of waiting and their navigation of the changing situation in Rabat reshaped their strategies to realize their hoped-for futures.

A STORY OF UNINTENDED SETTLEMENT

Bernard, a college graduate from Cameroon in his late thirties, was one of the first to introduce me to the precarious livelihoods of sub-Saharan Africans living in Rabat. Already in Rabat for four years, unable to move on and without a steady job he appeared to be stuck. When he left Cameroon, his objective was clear: since he did not succeed in getting a well-paid job despite having worked for an international NGO for a few years, he wanted to go to France. His girlfriend was then to follow. He left a sum of money with his mother to provide for his girlfriend and her child and to wire to him if needed. As the journey was more expensive than expected, he ran out of savings in Algeria. This was where his plan began to change; he had to work in Oran seven months before being able to continue to Morocco.

Although prospective migrants may leave money with family members to enable transfers when need be, as in Bernard's case, it is more common to rely on money raised by the family once the need has arisen (Collyer 2007; own observations). This way the costs of the journey can be spread out over a longer period of time, making it more affordable despite the fact that the intensification of border surveillance has fostered a need for using brokers and smuggling networks and moreover has made migrants susceptible to extortion of money by officials and brokers (Bredeloup 2012: 460; Collyer and de Haas 2012: 475; Schapendonk 2010:123-5). The reliance on assistance from family and friends along the route embeds migrants in a web of reciprocities whether the decision to migrate was an individual one or not. In the past Bernard's mother had sent 100,000 CFA francs (€152) from time to time to ease his difficulties in Rabat but after her husband had a stroke, medical bills took priority. Our repeated conversations in the spring 2012 often centred on Bernard being in a very constrained financial situation and he spoke about his inability to remit money to his mother. Although she still worked and had a relatively well paid job, Bernard was acutely aware of the social expectations

of him as he was approaching middle age. Moreover, he was an only child and even though his mother had raised a number of other children, the responsibility for her old age rested on Bernard.

For young African men, social im/mobility is associated with personhood and the gradual process of social becoming that is consolidated by marrying, setting up an independent household, and progressively taking on material and symbolic responsibilities (Piot 1999: 89-94; Riccio 2005; Timera 2001). Bernard and a number of other migrants, I interviewed in Rabat, were concerned about not assuming the material and social responsibilities appropriate to their relative age and structural position within the family and to the emotional relationships they cherished with significant family members. Several of them had lived independently of their families before migrating, some had one or more children towards whom they had material and emotional responsibilities, and some had migrated to work in neighbouring countries and had assisted their families materially in the past. However, in an attempt to further their migration, they came to rely on money transfers from non-migrant relatives and on their parents or partners to meet all needs of children left in their care.

Remittances from migrants and reverse remittances from relatives are part and parcel of the moral economy of migration and signify the mutual interdependencies that characterize family relations in societies where affective relationships are intertwined with material and symbolical resources, privileges and obligations (Whitehead and Kabeer 2001). In the case of protracted journeys, the financial support provided by family members suggest that migratory projects are rooted in a shared expectation of migration as a means of economic security and upward social mobility that eventually will reflect on those with affective ties with the migrant. But, given the uncertainties and risks inherent in irregular migration, the steadfast idea of what migration will bring – the expectation – is transformed into hope, that is, into wanting to benefit from imagined opportunities elsewhere and believing that this objective can be attained in the near or distant future if only actively pursued. Thus hope becomes vested in individuals' ability to endure hardship along the route, to find ways of circumventing barriers, to retain their objective, and to wait.

Notwithstanding that Bernard's account of his life in Rabat was full of gaps it illuminated ambiguities in his sense of waiting. He had been fortunate to hold a couple of well-paid jobs; the first one shortly after he arrived was paid very well but for a month only. In our conversations he elaborated on what he perceived as good jobs and described how he taught Moroccan children outside school hours and had secured a job in a call-centre on the basis of

his CV alone. He thus signalled that Rabat had seemed promising in the past, and his accommodation bore signs of settlement. He lived on his own in a room furnished with a quilt-covered double bed, a worn sofa and armchair and a cabinet with his TV set, satellite receiver and DVD-player. Positioning himself as a mature, successful man, he was involved in one of the Cameroonian diaspora groups and often sought to facilitate assistance for compatriots. Bernard avoided speaking about what he was doing between the jobs he considered good but made clear that he never had worked as a casual labourer in construction sites. His energy expenditure would not be commensurate with the wage, he explained, so although the job would help pay the rent, he would not be able to save. Despite frequent financial problems, he managed to find the money to pay rent and bills of around 900 DH (€80) per month. As a contrast, those focused on the onward journey often worked as casual labourers and kept costs to a minimum by sacrificing comfort and sharing crowded rooms with thin mattresses on the floor, for which they paid 150-200 DH (€13-18) per month. Thus Bernard made distinct choices as regards the kind of activities he would engage in and the life he wanted to live.

It was not clear why Bernard stalled in Rabat after having had a well-paid job. Either his first job gave him the impression that he could attain his goals in Morocco and thus did not need to take any risks or he simply did not have the €1,200 that, at the time, was the rate paid to smugglers organizing sea crossings. However, his assessment of the risks involved in crossing the Mediterranean must be seen in a temporal perspective and take into account the political economy of migration management. He arrived in Rabat within six months of the incident where Moroccan security forces shot at, killed and injured migrants leaving the Moroccan coast for the Canary Islands. While others made a virtue of the risks they had taken in multiple attempts to cross into European territory to demonstrate their courage and perseverance, Bernard gave prominence to his academic skills that had allowed him to find well-paid jobs and cultivate relationships with university educated migrants. Yet, in the shifting terrain of Rabat job opportunities had waxed and waned in the course of four years. During this time Bernard's girlfriend lost trust in his project and in his ability to facilitate her migration. She left his mother's house with her son and later, with the help of a sister living in France, made it to France. This was a serious blow to Bernard's sense of self. Although the outcome of the migratory project has become increasingly individualized, the assessment of whether the migrant might attain his or her goals has not. The assistance provided by family members means that they too assess whether protracted waiting is worthwhile, but they do so without knowing all dimensions of life at the place where the migrant lives.

By 2012 it had become almost impossible for migrants to get a relatively well paid job without a residence permit and Bernard had slid into a situation of perpetual indebtedness, which cast doubt on his judgement and choices in the past. The failure to further his material and symbolic mobility and the increasing marginalization experienced in Morocco had eroded Bernard's interest in waiting for what could eventually be attained in Europe. The avoidance of taking risks and making sacrifices wedged him into a situation of protracted uncertainty. During our conversations he spoke of returning to Cameroon, not least because his mother was increasingly expressing concerns that she would never see him again thereby indicating that she too had lost faith in his migratory project. However, he was apprehensive of returning empty-handed considering the money he and his mother had invested in his migration and the long time spent waiting. July 2012 he applied for work in an international organization known for employing a small number of irregular migrants to do outreach work, attesting that the decision to return is not easily taken and that he still hoped to turn around his fate in Morocco. Eventually, in March 2013, he returned to Cameroon on a flight paid by his mother.

SUSPENDED TRANSIT-EXISTENCES

For Souleyman, a 28-year-old Liberian trader who grew up in a refugee camp in Guinea, life had taken a different turn than he had imagined when flying into Casablanca January 2012. He had been spurred on by the success of a friend's brother, who returned from Morocco with €25,000 to set up an internet café in Conakry. The plan to do business in Morocco seemed expedient to Souleyman, who had worked himself up from trade in second-hand clothes in Conakry to regional trade and barter of clothes and food products. A short while before travelling to Morocco he started to trade car tires which he acquired in some murky deal with shipping agents in the container terminal. He was doing well for himself and had the material and social means to buy a Guinean passport despite his Liberian roots; an air ticket; and to bring US\$700 (€540) in cash. Souleyman only discovered that Drahman, his friend's brother, earned his money by doing scams once he was in Morocco. He was adamant that he would never take money from someone who had worked hard to save for maybe fifteen or thirty years.

The desire to be recognized as materially successful increasingly engenders pretentious consumption, trickery and deception (Banégas and Warnier 2001; Bredeloup 2008). My analysis is not concerned with Drahman's fraudulent activities but with the deception implied in the embodiment of success and the way in which it feeds into the imagined horizons of opportunity of prospective migrants. That an investment of €25,000 into a business fuels the

motivations of others is hardly surprising, that Souleyman only sought information about how to get to Morocco and not about business potential is. However, studies in Cameroon (Tazanu 2012), Ghana (Nieswand 2013) and Senegal (Riccio 2005) demonstrate that non-migrants are well aware of migrants building their success on doing odd jobs they would not have done at home. What seems important in the communities where the migrants would like to accrue social status is the outcome of their migratory project, not the means to get there. Yet, it is clear from Souleyman's and other migrants' accounts that trickery and deception is embedded in morality and while some types are deemed acceptable others are not. Circumventing migration control by getting the right kind of passport, for example, is commended – Guinean passport holders who could prove they had sufficient means, for example, were granted a 90-day visa upon arrival in Morocco in 2012. Views on fraudulent business practices are more diverse. Frei's study of money-making through internet scams in Cameroon illuminates that fraudsters sometimes play down moral concerns with reference to historical and global inequalities or to a religious discourse about forgiveness. People not involved may excuse fraudulent business with the lack of alternatives or link them with occult or immoral practices (Frei 2012: 62-4). Obviously, such contesting views add to the secrecy surrounding incomes deriving from fraud. The fact that prospective migrants base their evaluation of what they can attain at a certain location on scant evidence nourishes the process of transforming expectation to hope and, more specifically, to a mode of hoping that individualizes success and failure because hope becomes premised on individuals' shrewdness, their ability to defer their objective for an unknown period of time, and to endure hardship in difficult environments.

Souleyman spent the first couple of months in Rabat assessing his opportunities and concluded that he would be better off returning to Guinea. He did not frame this decision in terms of failure but rather as another contingency in his life. As he did not have an operational return ticket² or sufficient money to pay for a return flight, he opted for the IOM assisted voluntary repatriation (AVR) programme aimed at stranded migrants. This plan turned out to be more complex than anticipated. The IOM office in Rabat was out of funds and repeatedly told potential repatriates to wait a few months³. With the postponement another problem emerged: Souleyman overstayed his visa and therefore needed a *laissez-passer* issued by his embassy to leave Morocco legally. Despite having lived most of his life in Guinea and speaking Susu (one of the main languages in Guinea), he was convinced that the Guinean embassy would discover immediately that he had obtained his passport through corrupt police officers and therefore would refuse to sign a *laissez-passer*. He did not like the idea of going to Liberia. His

mother had died in Guinea ten years earlier and, since his grandfather had disowned his mother when she became pregnant before marriage, he had no contact with relatives in Liberia. Instead he had developed an extensive network of social relations in Conakry. This complication made him ponder about other options, about other places within and outside the African continent. Souleyman's encounter with IOM's AVR programme reveals that despite migratory projects increasingly being conceptualized as on-going processes without fixed end points (Collyer 2010; Schapendonk 2010), return is still conceptualized as the journey back to the homeland. Erased is the long history of migration and settlement in sub-Saharan Africa, whether voluntary or forced, that implies migrants may have important allegiances in other places than their native country but may have been unable or reluctant to obtain citizenship and legal identity papers there.

Although Souleyman had neither experienced protracted uncertainty nor a long period of waiting during his relatively short stay in Rabat, he was nevertheless stranded. His immobility owed to a risky mode of traveling, reducing the initial cost by not having an effective return ticket and having insufficient means to act upon discovering that the destination did not hold in store the desired opportunities. It also owed to his choice of relying on IOM instead of traveling back overland because he thought this strategy would allow him to return quickly to resume his business before losing trading partners. Moreover, the AVR programme included a repatriation assistance of US\$500 (€390) that would kick-start his business. However, the temporary discontinuation of AVR programmes and, not least, the communication strategy employed in 2012 by the IOM office in Rabat of recurring postponement retained or pushed Souleyman and other migrants into suspended transit-existences.

While waiting, Souleyman tried to find casual work by lining up with other migrants from sub-Saharan Africa at a small park near Kamra bus station in Rabat. At the other side of the road Moroccan job-seekers lined up. The competition was fierce. Finally he got a week-long contract at a construction site but was not paid at the end because his employer claimed to have run out of money to pay his salary. Through a friend he then got a job on another construction site where he was paid. However during the Ramadan all work on the construction sites ceased and, despite coinciding with increased control of irregular migrants, Souleyman was obliged to beg in the streets. To make ends meet during this period he sold two of the three traditional attires of good quality which he had brought from Guinea. By early September 2012 he seemed to pick up casual work with regular intervals.

As a contrast to Bernard who sought to uphold a certain social standing at great difficulty, Souleyman did not seem concerned about resorting to lowly paid contractual work despite having set out to develop a flourishing business. An important reason was that by writing off Morocco as a fruitful place to be, his horizon for living there was short. His familiarity with the risks and contingencies inherent in informal trade and barter, where business opportunities shift from being highly profitable to collapsing within a short span of time, shaped his response and he did not succumb to regret when his investment in migration did not pay dividend. Instead he deliberated on how and where he could get on with his life in the near future. In this respect his situation resembled that of Guinea-Bissauan migrants in Portugal who, observes Vigh, experienced such dense marginalization that the possibility of ever being successful there had become unimaginable to them. These migrants retained hope in the migratory project itself by transposing whatever they desired temporally and spatially. What they could not gain in Portugal, they hoped to gain once they had moved on to one of the old core countries of the European Union (Vigh 2009: 105).

The temporal dimension is hardly surprising since hope always is orientated towards the future and entails the anticipation of realizing a hoped-for objective (Mar 2005: 365; Webb 2007). Where the spatial transposition in Vigh's analysis plays on global hierarchies and a historically embedded imagination of what can be gained in different European economies, Souleyman's reflections grew out of his trade and focused primarily on business potential within the continent and, especially in Angola. In the course of waiting, Souleyman's transposition of hope became increasingly abstract because it was not focused on a particular location but on an indistinct elsewhere that was more difficult to act upon. His waiting became akin to that of displaced people who had little control over their trajectories. He ended up staying in Morocco for 20 months before he was repatriated to Guinea by IOM and given US\$500 to resume his business.

AMBIGUOUS PLANS

The complexity of social relations, migrant networks and kinship relations becomes apparent when following 19-year-old Abdoukarim's path. His journey from Senegal to Morocco early 2012 was motivated by the aspiration of capitalizing on formal schooling. Abdoukarim was one of the youngest migrants I met in Rabat and the one whose family had been most implicated in his migration. He was a very keen secondary school student in his final year but the insecurity and many strikes in the time leading up to the presidential elections in Senegal resulted in

students losing a year. This was his father's justification for sending him to Morocco but, as it emerged in later conversations, his father was due to retire and the family might not have been able to meet Abdoukarim's educational aspirations of becoming an architect. But it was not only his father's decision. The entire family contributed to pay the 12,000 CFA francs (€18) for Abdoukarim's journey over land from Senegal to Morocco. His father sold a sheep, his mother a gold ring and his younger sister some of her belongings, because they thought it would benefit all of them if Abdoukarim worked or studied in Morocco.

Throughout West Africa, migration is an important path to social becoming when education fails to bring social mobility (Banégas and Warnier 2001; Tazanu 2012). While the focus often is on youthful migrants' navigation of constraints in their social environment (Vigh 2009), Abdoukarim's story illuminates some of the ambiguities at the crossroads of individual and collective family aspirations. Unable to keep their children in formal education, some parents make up for their financial constraints by pushing their children onto alternative paths towards the hoped-for social mobility. This is not to say that young people are not keen to migrate. During our first conversations, Abdoukarim's hope of continuing education emerged regularly, despite the fact that the plan was for him to work in a call-centre two to three years to save up money. What the savings were for was not at all clear. Sometimes he talked about returning to Senegal to finish secondary school, sometimes about enrolling in education in Morocco, and sometimes of continuing to Spain where two of his cousins were in education – they were taking Spanish classes it turned out. However, he also spoke about his family's reliance on small remittances from two uncles who worked in Spain and Saudi Arabia respectively, intimating that he might be expected to work for the family rather than spending on his education. Thus, despite the migratory project being a collective one, it does not imply the objectives are the same.

The idea of working in a call-centre circulates among prospective and recently arrived migrants from Francophone countries, because it has been a sector of relatively easy entry for migrants willing to accept long working days for a wage of 3-4,000 DH (€270-350) per month. In Fes, for example, almost one-third of the migrants from sub-Saharan Africa worked in call-centres in 2009 (Berriane et al. 2010: 53-4). However, tightened migration control has resulted in stricter control of employees' right to work in Morocco, and employees are increasingly international students enrolled at Moroccan colleges and universities, who hold a residence permit. Despite contacting all the call-centres in Rabat and Casablanca that he identified in

conversations with other migrants and through internet searches, Abdoukarim was stopped by the need to show a residence permit to get employed.

This was how he came to look for casual work at the park close to Kamra bus station. Being one of the youngest and of a slight build he lost out in the competition for jobs to migrants in their late twenties and early thirties who were already used to do physically hard work. For him the time spent in the park with the other migrants seeking casual work was more a show of willingness to work than an actual pathway to obtain work. Not only would this elicit an acceptance among his compatriots of him not always contributing to the bills, but it also served to prove to his father that he remained dedicated to his family's collective goal. His father's immediate response to his account of the difficulties of finding work was that he should be patient and continue trying. Moreover, he tried to readjust his son's path by phoning his wife's brother in Spain to enlist his help in getting Abdoukarim to Spain. Phone calls from Abdoukarim's mother's brother, encouragement and promises of bringing him to Spain in a couple of months ensued. Then his uncle sent €50 to ease his life in Rabat but money for the journey to Spain never materialized. When Abdoukarim reminded his uncle of his difficult situation five months later, he was told to try harder and not be lazy.

The spatial transposition of hope is not just an outcome of having experienced marginalization and the inability to meet individual objectives but a much broader logic embedding the search for better opportunities in collective strategies. Yet, individual and collective family aspirations and expectations do not just meet in the relationships between children and parents but also in transnational family relations within and across generations. Many migrants have affective, social and economic relationships stretching North, South, East and West. When migrants in Morocco are in touch with relatives and friends at home and abroad, they are subjected to understandings of hardship and waiting, the sense of being stuck and moral obligations reconfigured by lived experiences in different places. Both Abdoukarim and his father alluded to long-established significant relationships between men and their sister's children when enlisting the help of his maternal uncle to overcome the exclusion of migrants in Morocco. They did not do this in a rigid and mechanical way but discretely referred to the moral obligations of an older and better-off uncle to ease the hardship of a youth considered his child. Observations in Rabat show that financial help from migrants already in Europe is a key source to raise adequate money to make the crossing. Such help often comes from migrants who have themselves experienced the structural marginalisation in Morocco in recent years. Migrants, like Abdoukarim's uncle, who came to Europe before visa restrictions

were tightened, perceive complaints about hardship differently. They draw on their own experience in Europe to compare claims of suffering in Europe and North Africa and evaluate the need for assisting accordingly. Moreover, they find that they can neither afford nor refuse requests for help because their social esteem hinges on the embodiment of success through visibility and consumption. As a result, they only reject demands in subtle ways, which postpone assistance and push migrants into suspended existences of waiting.

In the beginning, Abdoukarim trusted that his uncle would arrange papers for him so he could enter Spain legally. He was well aware of the possibilities and explained that undocumented crossings could be done by zodiac, boat or car. The cars smuggling people into Spain were expensive; in 2012 they required a payment of €3,000 whereas boats and large zodiacs cost around €1,000. Other migrants sketched how they organized themselves in small groups, each contributing 3-5,000 DH (€270-450) towards buying a ‘zodiac’ – a small rubber dinghy – to enter Ceuta or Melilla or go all the way to mainland Spain. In the course of waiting, Abdoukarim stopped believing his uncle’s promises. By early September, he managed to get on a zodiac without paying much but before reaching Spanish territory they were intercepted and returned to Tangier. On their way to be deported to Oujda, he managed to escape and return to Rabat where he began to work for a Senegalese trader. Perceived as an apprentice, Abdoukarim did not earn a wage proper but was given lodging and boarding and occasionally a small sum of money. While this eased his everyday situation considerably, the work did not allow him to accrue status materially or socially. Early 2013, Abdoukarim made it to Spain where he, unable to find work due to his irregular status, lived with Senegalese compatriots without contributing to the household. He did not meet his uncle but moved on to Germany in the Summer 2014.

CONCLUSION

This article set out to explore how waiting and the living conditions in precarious border zones shape migrants’ lives and configure how they act upon opportunity and constraint to realize their hoped-for futures. The three case studies sketched what could be termed as contemporary transit typologies, though they certainly would not be exhaustive and the contingent nature of migrants’ pathways bring typologies to overlap at some points in time while separating them at other times. At one level, Bernard’s story represents the stereotypical image of ‘the transit migrant’ who becomes stuck because he runs out of money or is up against strict border control. However, this representation would flatten the ambiguity shrouding his time in Rabat; ignore

the choices made and the emergence and disappearance of opportunity during the four years. Souleyman's story provides further evidence of migrants' shifting goals along the migratory pathway driven by the attainment of new knowledge and, in precarious border zones, especially by the difficulties migrants experience in realizing their aspirations because they are labelled as transit migrants on their way to Europe. This label is used discursively, argues Hess, to obscure processes of settling and to deny migrants the status and rights of immigrants (Hess 2012: 434). Finally, Abdoukarim's story epitomizes an understudied theme, namely the vagueness of migration plans implicating several members of transnational families. The importance in the three stories lies in the unveiling of temporalities underlying the active waiting, the intersection with everyday life in contexts governed by restrictive regimes of mobility and the moral and material economies of family relations.

First, the notion of active waiting accentuates dimensions of time such as tempo and duration that weigh on the sense and experience of waiting. Tempo encompasses ideas about the speed at which things should happen, which in turn is closely connected with local patterns guiding the pace of life in particular places, while duration denotes chronological time and the horizon of plans coming to fruition (Gray 2011; Levine 2008). The journeys from Cameroon, Guinea and Senegal are examples of different tempos. Bernard's lengthy journey implied that he came to Rabat with another time frame in mind than Souleyman and Abdoukarim who had straight-forward journeys and arrived with expectations of quickly finding business or work. Thus the tempo of individual pathways affects migrants' preparedness for waiting. While the literature on migrants' long-term waiting points to possible stabilization and changing end-goals (Brun 2015; Poutignat 2012), the three stories show a more complex picture of the experience of long-term waiting and the involvement of others in the assessment of which pathways are worth pursuing and which are worth waiting for. Due to the individualisation of success and failure such assessments come to focus on migrants' capacity to navigate the situation rather than on the conditions determining their waiting.

Second, the shifting terrain of Rabat highlights a number of temporalities affecting migrants' lives. Irrespective of their motivation for coming to Morocco, migrants experience similar emotional paths vis-à-vis being there. The beginning is characterized by great optimism regarding their ability to realize their objective which subsequently shrinks as they become familiar with the conditions for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, the influence of time at the subject level is intersected with temporalities rooted in the political economies of migration management. Souleyman's and Abdoukarim's optimism appeared to vanish quicker

in 2012 than it did for Bernard in 2007. Apart from personal predilections affecting the ability to wait and the objectives with which they had come to Morocco, the possibilities for gaining employment and thus a livelihood had contracted in 2012 due to legislative limitations on formal employment and economic constraints in the construction sector that decreased casual work. The hope for something better thus needed to be transposed to a location other than Morocco to preserve the belief in having a future. As a contrast, Bernard had transposed the hope for better opportunities from France to Morocco because of the risks involved in sea crossings in 2007. Structural changes in precarious border zones thus prompt spatial shifts in where migrants vest their hopes. This is not just a question of how migrants navigate the context individually; family members influence decisions through sending money and trying to engage the assistance of others. The migration project is not an individual one but firmly embedded in family relations and collective expectations.

Third, the issue of assistance and the anticipation of remitting/receiving remittances brings to fore the time frame within which family members give and receive. Mostly, exchanges of gifts and services are analyzed in terms of the values and norms that encourage them and guide the way in which they are evaluated by givers and receivers respectively. Thus, the analysis easily becomes focused on expectations of reciprocation and on whether givers meet or fail the expectations receivers have of them. When migrants justify their reluctance to give up waiting and return home with being indebted to people who helped finance the journey (Collyer 2010: 288, own observations), they refer to a relatively direct evaluation of investment and repayment, which in some cases reflects the concrete situation. However, the stories told by Bernard, Abdoukarim and other migrants in Rabat challenge such a narrow model, as it does not capture the moral and affective dynamics underpinning why relatives continue to send money or why they evade requests. Nor does it capture how migrants act upon emotions ranging from gratitude, to interdependency, to feeling deceived, to wanting to prove themselves. In addition to being motivated by affective relationships, material and social assistance may be encouraged by past favours or be orientated to the future. They reflect long-term concerns but also the trade-offs migrants and non-migrants make between immediate desires and the anticipated goal of migration. Abdoukarim's story illuminates the family's collective expectation that his migration can secure their wellbeing and social status. However, the reliance on an uncle already in Europe adds a new dimension; the consequences of difficulties in precarious border zones are referred to migrants in places imagined to provide the 'good life' in the hope that they can reduce the waiting by assisting the onward journey

through remittances. Thus migrants in different places are woven into the interdependencies within the transnational family and the way in which each of them navigate these relations and the location specific temporalities affect others by creating opportunities and/or constraints, inducing risky strategies and/or being suspended in waiting.

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¹ Although my research involved both female and male migrants, forced and voluntary migrants, I have chosen to focus this paper on voluntary male migrants and their narratives about being a migrant in Rabat. Part of the reason is that female migrants have very different experiences, even more limited possibilities of finding employment and generally are subject to social critique and stigmatization that merit a full analysis. Their narratives tended to focus on the difficulties they encountered on along the route and in Rabat and much less on their family relations.

² See Alpes, this volume, for a more detailed account of travel arrangements brokered by agents to sidestep restrictive regimes of mobility.

³ IOM Press Briefing Notes 21/07/2009 and 02/10/2012 (<http://www.iom.int/cms/pbn>, accessed 10/07/2013).